(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) the names of districts of these States whose demands for setting up branches of other banks than the present ones are pending; and

(d) since when the demand for the fulfilment of this requirement in Jashpur district head quarter (Chhattisgarh) is being made alongwith details of action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that the District Headquarters of Bastar, Dantewara, Jashpurnagar and Korea colliery in the State of Chhattisgarh are having only one branch each of Public Sector Banks (PSBs). However, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, all its district headquarters have got more than one branch of PSBs.

As per the RBI's extant branch expansion policy it is left to the discretion of the banks to identify the locality/centre for opening of additional bank branches and they do so after taking into consideration certain factors such as business potential, viability, infrastructure, security etc.

(c) and (d) There was demand for opening of a branch of Central Bank of India or any other Nationalised Bank in Jashpurnagar (Chhattisgarh) in February, 2004. The Central Bank of India has however regretted its inability to open a branch there.

Separate framework for Co-operative Banks

1427. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to go in for merger of public sector banks;

(b) if so, details of the merger plan;

(c) whether Government propose to work out a separate framework for Co-operative Banks with a view to free them from supervision of multiple agencies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Any proposal for consolidation by way of merger among public sector banks has to come from the

management of the banks concerned with Govt. playing a supportive role. The Boards of Banks have to take a decision in this regard based on the synergy levels of merging/consolidating entities.

(c) and (d) As a part of reform process the issues of the cooperative banking sector are also under review of the Government. In this regard a task force was appointed by the Government under the Chairmanship of Shri A. Vaidyanathan. The final report of the task force on short-term credit structure has been submitted to the Govt. on February 15, 2005. Government has further entrusted the work of studying the long-term cooperative credit structure for agriculture and rural development to the same task force. The task force is required to submit its report by 30th June, 2005.

IRS officials involved in corruption cases

†1428. *SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI*: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of IRS officials found involved in corruption cases during the last three years; and

(b) the details thereof and the action taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The number of IRS officers found involved in corruption cases during the last three years is 103.*

(b) Disciplinary proceedings under Rule 14 of the CCS (CCA) Rules have been initiated against the concerned officers in consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission. In cases investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation, sanction has been accorded for prosecution in appropriate cases in consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission. Keeping in view the gravity of the case and also based on the recommendation of the Central Bureau of Investigation, officers have been placed under suspension wherever found necessary.

Theft of cheques from ATM drop boxes

†1429. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

*The figure includes cases which were detected during the calender years 2002, 2003 and 2004.